

The sure Side:
OR,
 God and the Church.
 A
 SERMON
 Preached on the
Fifth of NOVEMBER, 1714.
 IN THE
 PARISH of St. JOHN WAPPING.

BY
 THOMAS SIMMONS.

The Lord is on my side, I will not fear what Man can do unto me, Psal. 118. 6.

If God be for us, who can be against us, Rom. 8. 31.

All the Enemies of Zion open their Mouth against Her, they hiss, and Gnash their Teeth, Lam. 2. 16.

Our Help is in the Name of the LORD, who made Heaven and Earth.

L O N D O N,

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To the Reverend

Mr. *Hugh Fitts*

AND

Mr. *Daniel Rainey*



PASTORS.

Together with the

ELDERS and DEACONS

OF THE

English Church

AT

AMSTERDAM.

BRETHREN,

WHen Providence lately cast me among
You, and opened a Door of Usefulness,
during my Sojourning there: It was expected by
several, that I should have offered to the Publick
View

The Dedication.

View two Sermons on the late Peace, concluded between your Most **ILLUSTRIOUS** **REPUBLICK** and the French King: *Had they seen the Light (which by some Incidents were prevented)* YOU might justly have been Entitled to the Inscription as above. No sooner was I Importuned to the Publication of the Ensuing Discourse ; but I thought to prefix your Names to it : And I am perswaded that the Subject is of such a Nature, as to move you to partake in our Joy.

The past Deliverances that we with thankfulness Commemorate, are so diffusive, that even Your **REPUBLICK** and the whole Protestant Interest share the Advantage. I doubt not but all true Protestants among You, were sensible of the Danger, the Protestant Religion and the Liberties of Europe were in, had not your **STATES** assisted so seasonably, in the Happy **REVOLUTION**, brought about by the **LATE KING WILLIAM** of Immortal Memory ;
whereby

The Dedication.

whereby **WE** were freed from a **POPISH** and preserved from a **FRENCH YOKE**.

And when for our Sins the Cloud was Gathering again, and we were in the utmost Danger; God was pleased, upon her late Majesties Demise, to send us our Present **SOVEREIGN: A KING**, whom we pray may be the **DARLING** of Heaven, the **FATHER** of all his People, the **DEFENDER** of the Protestant Faith, a **Constant FRIEND** and **ALLIE** to your **ILLUSTRIOUS REPUBLICK**, & the **GUARDIAN** of the Liberties of Europe; in which Wishes, I doubt not of your Hearty Concurrence.

My best Wishes are for the **PROSPERITY** of your **CHURCH**; That the **ADMINISTRATION** therein may be abundantly blessed; That your **CITY** may be still Renowned; that the **POWER** of **GODLINESS** may prevail, and a Flourishing Trade there; and that it may go well with all the **UNITED PROVINCES**; with which there may be continually Cultivated and Promoted a
lasting

The Dedication.

*lasting Friendship between them and these Realms,
to the Mutual Advantage and Safety of both, is the
Hearty Desire of, BRETHREN,*

Yours,

In the Fellowship

of the GOSPEL,

*London,
November the 11th,
1714.*

THO. SIMMONS.

A



I

A

SERMON

Preached on the

Fifth of NOVEMBER, 1714.

Psalm 124. 1, 2, 3 Verses.

If it had not been the LORD, who was on our side, now may Israel say; If it had not been the LORD, who was on our side, when Men rose up against us; then they had swallowed us up Quick, when their Wrath was kindled against us.

THE Jews were a People highly favoured of GOD, and while they maintained the Character of his People, he was their Saviour in Time of Trouble. What Miracles were wrought in
B their

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their behalf; and how oft did Divine Power Signalize it self in their many Eminent and Glorious Deliverances.

THIS *Psalms* is a Triumphant Song of the CHURCH, upon some Remarkable Salvation wrought; and by the Title, it seems it was Composed by *David*; the particular Occasion of it we are not told; but to be sure, it was some very Notable Deliverance at a time of Imminent Danger, and so may serve as a Pattern to the Churches in all Ages, for Praise and Thansgiving to GOD, under the like Salvation.

IN the Words you may observe these following Things.

First, ISRAEL's Danger, Men rose up against them, Enemies, and it seems, very Dangerous Enemies; whether *Foreign* or *Domestick*, or both, the *Psalmist* doth not inform us: However they were such as would have been too hard for them, they would have fallen as a *Prey* into their Teeth, *ver. 6.* had it not been that,

Secondly, ISRAEL's Deliverer was the LORD; If the LORD had not been on our side. The Great God takes their Part, and joyns in their Cause and Quarrel. He was on their side, he engages in the Quarrel of his Church against all the World. The Church is but a Party, and a small Party

too:

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too: Her Enemies are more in Number abundantly. God's Church is but a little Flock, *Luk. 12. 32.* and in her self but of small Strength; but then God comes in to her Aid, He is of her side, and this makes her Superiour in Strength to all her Enemies.

W H A T E V E R lesser *Parties* and Divisions there may be amongst Men, that may Embroil and Inflame the Nations, there are but two General *Parties*, and such *Parties* as can never be reconcil'd; the *CHURCH* and the *WORLD*. Indeed, some that call themselves the Church, may go into the World, into the same Measures; and on the contrary, the World may go into the Measures of such a Church, and make use of her Name, to gain her Ends: But in reality the World and the Church are two distinct and opposite Interests, and have distinct Confederates and Leaders.

T H E World has Satan the Prince of Darkness, stiled the God of this World, *2 Cor. 4. 4.* to lead her on, in Opposition to the Church, and the Church can Glory, in the *LORD* as on her side, he enables her to make Head against the World and the Devil. God Espouses her Cause, He stands by her, her Interests he will maintain, and the Gates of Hell shall not prevail against her, *Mat. 16. 18.*

B 2

Thirdly,

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Thirdly, T H E Deplorableness of Israel's Condition, If God had not been on their side. Then they had Swallowed us up Quick, when their Wrath was kindled against us. Such were their Numbers, and such was their Wrath, that they would have made a quick Dispatch; we should have been but as a Mouthful, they would have swallowed us up Quick, like Beasts of Prey inured to Devour. These Men like the devouring Deep would have over-whelmed us, and as a raging Stream and Proud Waters, whose Mighty Billows and Waves, do Foam and Roar, would have gone over our Souls, ver. 4, 5. We should not only have heard their high swelling Words of Vanity, foaming out their own shame, but we should have felt their terrible Power, and have found their tender Mercies Cruelty.

Fourthly, T H E Seasonableness of their Deliverance. When Men rose up, then God was on their Side. When their Danger was near, their Deliverance was as nigh. The Enemy thought the Game their own, and were ready to catch at the Prey; but then God appears. He loves to make the Season of his People's Extremity, his own Time, his own Opportunity, to appear in their Favour. In the Mount of the Lord it shall be seen, Gen. 22. 14.

W H E N

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WHEN Men rose up, then was it time for God to Work; He sometimes tries his Enemies, to see what they would be at, how far their Mischief would lead them; and he sometimes tries his People, to see how they behave themselves, under dark Prospects, and in an evil Day; and then in the Critical Juncture, he appears himself. He usually prepares his People for Deliverance, by causing them to Cry mightily to him, and then comes into their succour and aid.

Fifthly, THE Acknowledgment due for Divine Deliverance. Now may Israel say, must say, and will say, we are ungrateful to our God, if we don't speak of his Mercies. But perhaps the Psalmist by this Expression, Now Israel may say, would put them in Mind, that lately, they could not say, what they would: Their Enemies were formidable, and Deliverance not yet given in; so that they could not in an open and publick manner, say, that of God, or for God, that they would do. But now may Israel speak for God, that has been the God of their Salvation, and sing his Praises, and shew forth his Wonderful Works.

FROM the Words thus Explained, we may collect these following OBSERVATIONS.

Obs.

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Obs. I. THE Church and People of God may be exposed to Eminent Danger.

Obs. II. THOUGH their Danger may be great, the Lord is on their Side.

Obs. III. THEIR Safety lies, in God's Espousing their Cause.

Obs. IV. GOD will appear for their Salvation, in the most needful and proper Season.

Obs. V. DIVINE Appearances in Favour to, and for the Deliverance of, his Church and People, ought to be remembred, and call for a thankful Acknowledgment.

THIS last, may serve for the APPLICATION; we shall offer something on each of these Observations.

Obs. I. THE Church and People of God may be exposed to very Eminent Danger.

The Church in the Text was so; there were Enemies that rose up against them, and such as would have swallowed them up Quick.

IT's

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IT's no new thing for the Church to be brought into great straits and difficulties. How was it with *Israel* at the *Red Sea*; if they went on, there was the *Sea* before them; would they retreat, the *Enemy* was behind, and if they stood still, the *Enemy* would overtake. Such Dilemmas were they brought unto: And had not God divided the Waters, *Exod. 14. 21.* and made them as a Wall on each side; the *Enemy* would have Swallowed them up Quick, or the proud Waters have gone over their Soul.

ISRAEL for their Iniquity were sold into *Egypt*. How perplexing were their Case, those that hated them had the Rule over them, and had not God remembered them, when bound in *Affliction* and *Iron*, there had been no turning again of their *Captivity*. They were a People inured to Great Afflictions, even from their beginning to be a People, *Psal. 129, 1—4.* Many a time have they Afflicted me from my Youth, may *Israel* now say, many a time have they Afflicted me from my Youth, yet have they not prevailed against me. The Plowers Plowed upon my Back, they made long their Furrows. God, for their sins, and the Tryal of their Faith, and that they might put their trust in him, did frequently suffer their *Enemies* to be as Pricks in their Eyes, and Thorns in their Sides.

AND

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AND how has it been with the Christian Church? She has been trained up under the Discipline of Affliction. How long was she as in the Wilderness, while Popery as a Deluge over-flowed almost all the Face of the Christian World: And when at the Reformation, she more openly and in greater Numbers began to shew her Face, what Difficulties, and Dangers attended her in getting out of the Deluge. And what enmity and opposition has she met with, all along, ever since her Secession from the *See of Rome*. And how have we of this Land been distressed, partly by those, who have always opposed a farther Reformation, and have shewed their Resentments, against those that have attempted it: Who, like the disaffected *Israelites*, remembred the *Onions* and *Garlick*, *Numb. 11. 5.* and were for returning back to *Egypt*, rather than advancing towards the Promised Land; and partly by those, who openly avow the *ROMISH SUPERSTITION*, and have often attempted by open violence, and secret fraud to reduce and bring us back.

HOW big was the expectation of the *Enemy* from the *Spanish Armado*? How desperate the Design of the Gun-powder Plot? And of late years, how great was the Danger from a Popish Reign, which made room for our Deliverance, by *KING WILLIAM*, who as this
Day

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Day Landed among us, for the rescue and defence of our *Religion* and *Liberties*. And even since so great a Deliverance, we have been exposed to fresh Difficulties and Dangers. How black was the design of the Assassination Plot? Which should fix a lasting Infamy, upon the Name and Memory of those that were Aiders and Abettors of so Diabolical a Design. How upish of late Years, have our known *Enemies*, the *Papists* and *Jacobites* been? who took Encouragement under the Connivance, and perhaps the Countenance, of those, that were lately in the Administration. And how has our danger grown upon us, by the encreasing Power of *France* (under the Influence of those, who have shewed themselves no Friends to their Country) and by those discouragements that have been laid upon the hearty Friends of the Protestant Religion, and unshaken Adherers to the Protestant Succession? What Methods of Disqualification have been taken to hinder those from serving their Country, that were most hearty in the Interest of it? And not contented to injure them by Personal Incapacities, they must be brought under Additional Hardships, as to their dear Posterity. And when there were such steps taken to Cramp and Weaken the Protestant *Dissenters*; there were Vigorous Pushes, which had they succeeded, might soon

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soon have involved the Established Church in the same Ruin with the *Dissenters*. How Melancholly were our Prospects of late? How high our Fears, and how low our Hopes? and were it not that God had stirred up a *Spirit of Prayer*, and in none more than among the Protestant *Dissenters* (who had their Solemn Days of Prayer in many of their Public Meeting-Houses) for the averting threatened Judgments, for the security of our holy Religion and the Protestant Succession; perhaps in a very little time, the Schemes of our Countrys Enemies might have been brought to bear, and the *PRETENDER* introduced to make his demand of the *CROWN*, at farthest, upon the *QUEEN*'s demise: This might have been the Case, had there been none to stand in the Gap. But blessed be God, that has not given us a *Prey* into the Enemies Teeth. *If it had not been the Lord, who was on our side, may Britain now say*, this might have been our Case; it might have been as bad with us as our Fears, and instead of a Protestant KING with a numerous Royal Offspring, we might have been Subjected to the Tyranny and Ulurpation of a *Popish Pretender*, brought up in the Maxims of *France*, and well qualified to be a Tool to *Rome* and *Hell*.

THESE were our Dangers! Dangers that the Protestant Religion and Succession lay exposed

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posed unto, and this leads to the Second Proposition.

Obs. II. THO' the Danger of God's Church and People may be great, yet the Lord is on their Side.

H E takes their Part, and stands by them, however any among them may be the Objects of the World's Flouts and Scorn, God is not ashamed of their Cause. *David* Glories in this, *Psal. 118. 67. The Lord is on my side, I will not fear what Man can do unto me, the Lord taketh my part with them that help me, therefore shall I see my desire upon them that hate me.* Him that is Godly, the Lord hath set apart for himself, *Psal. 4. 3.* He separates his People from the rest of the World, and then enters into a Confederacy with them; nay, undertakes to be their Head: He makes their Cause his own, and will never desert it.

What Proofs has he given of his Interesting himself in his Peoples Cause. Did he not do it at the *Red Sea*? Did he not shew his Power and Love in the Wilderness? How did he preserve them from their Enemies that were round about them? And how Miraculously did he feed them Forty Years, supplying them with *Water* out of the *Rock*, and giving them *Bread* from *Heaven*. How did he lead them over *Jordan*, and made way for their Settlement in the Promised Land?

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AND when he came to Erect and Establish the *GOSPEL CHURCH*; how has his Wisdom and Power carried him through his great and gracious designs, and thro' the good Hand of God upon it? It subsists to this very Day, and shall do so, till the Consummation of all Things.

WHAT Opposition did our Saviour and his Apostles, the first Publishers of the Gospel, meet with! and yet in spite of all Opposition, the Word did run and was *Glorified*: Many indeed lost their Lives in the Cause of Christianity; yet the Cause gained, and grew by their Death. So that according to that known remark. *The Blood of the Martyrs was the Seed of the Church.* Paul's Bonds tended to the furtherance of the Gospel, *Phil. 1. 12.* To make it spread and be more known; so that (saith he) *my Bonds in Christ are manifest in all the Palace and in all other places, ver. 13.* And the Brethren were so far from being discouraged by Paul's Bonds, (so as to desist from their Ministry) that he says, *many of them waxing Confident by my Bonds, are much more bold, to speak the Word without fear, verse 14.* so he tells us, *2 Tim. 29.* that he suffered trouble for the Gospel sake, even unto Bonds, but the Word of God is not bound.

AND those early Persecutions after the Apostles times, that infested the Christian Church, could not avail to her Overthrow, for God was on her

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her side : Indeed her Numbers have been often reduced; what by the Apostacies of *False Brethren*, and what by open Violence, whereby many have been Translated from the Church Militant, to the Church Triumphant: But yet, from the first *Propagation* of the *Gospel* to this very Day, there have not been wanting some who have remained *Stedfast* in the *Faith*, who have adhered to the *Testimony of Jesus*, and would by no means make *Shipwrack* of a good *Conscience*. While some have been Witnessing and Sealing the Truth with their Blood, there have been others, that have stood up to Maintain and Espouse the same Cause, so that Christ has not at any one time wanted a *Seed to serve him, that might be Accounted for a Generation, Psal. 22. 30.* They may have been scattered and dispersed, but they have subsisted. Histories may have been defective in their Account of them, & they may have been very much unknown to one another; and yet have been really in *Being*, & Numbers of them too, united by the same Bonds of the Spirit, real Members of the Mystical Body of Christ, tho' their External Confederacy and Communion may have been Interrupted.

ELIAS, (in his time, a time of great Degeneracy,) Good Man ! he thought himself the only Man, left to espouse the Cause of God, and they sought his Life to take it away ; 1 Kings 19. 14. yet v. 18, *I have left*

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left me seven Thousand in Israel, all the knees which have not bowed unto Baal, and every Mouth which have not kissed him. So in the very darkest times of Popery, though we have little or no Account, of those that have maintain'd their Separation, and adhered faithfully to the Truths of Christianity ; I doubt not, there have been Numbers that have been true *Followers* of the *Lamb*, who have received the Truth as it is in *Jesus*.

AND even at this time of Day, in a Neighbouring Nation ; notwithstanding the *Plowers* have made long their *Furrows*, and have put in Execution many barbarous and bloody Designs, to extirpate the Protestant Religion, to root out the *Hugonots*, as they term the Protestants ; yet, I doubt not, there are many in *FRANCE*, who from their Hearts embrace the Gospel, and have in the utmost detestation the Fopperies and Superstitions of *ROME* : And though, there seems to be fresh designs a hatching, to bring the new Converts (as they are called) and their Families under greater Hardships, yet God is able to revive his Work among them.

Not long since, when God went forth with our Armies, and made a haughty Monarch to tremble, Matters look'd not only as if the *Liberties of Europe* would be set upon a lasting Foundation, but as if, we might have successfully

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fully prevail'd, that the Protestants should again be restored to the publick Exercise of their Religion; and we need not have doubted, but many, who now are supposed to be of the *ROMISH RELIGION*, would have taken the first Opportunity, to testifie their dislike, and have shewn, that it was *Power* and *Fear*, and not *Choice*, that have so long detained them, in that wretched *Communion*. At whose Door the disappointment lies, is too melancholly a Subject to look back upon; besides, it's obvious, I need not inform you, who have been the Tools to spoil all these Views, and dash the most hopeful Designs, and promising Prospects to peices.

HOWEVER, we may still hope, that ere long, there will be *Inquisition for Blood*; for God *forgets not the Cry of the Humble*, *Psal. 9. 12.* and he will have regard to the Souls under the Altar, who are pleading, *how long O LORD, holy and true, dost thou not judg and avenge our Blood, on them that dwell on the Earth.* And if Britain, who has once lost so favourable an Opportunity, should not be again honoured with the Capacity, and trusted with the Power, of rescuing their Brethren, and fellow Christians, from the Bondage and Oppression of their Blood-thirsty Persecutors, yet God can Work by other Means, for his own Glory and their Deliverance.

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rance. And he not only *can*, but where he has a People, he *will*, sooner or later work for them: When they are ready to say with *Israel*, *our Bones are dried and our hope is lost, we are cut off for our Parts*, He can then *breath upon the slain that they may live*, and revive their languishing, dying, Hopes, *Ezek. 37. 9, 11.*

WE should on such a Day as this, do as the *Jews* upon their return out of *Babylon*, they thankfully own their own Deliverance, and yet earnestly pray for the turning again the Captivity of their Brethren; whose Case, by a becoming Sympathy they make their own; *Thou hast done great things for us, thou hast brought us out of Bondage*, some of us. *But turn again our Captivity*, the rest that are still in Bondage, *Psal. 124. 3, 4.* They look upon their Deliverance as incomplete, while any of their Brethren were under Suffering. O that there were the like sympathising Spirit amongst all that are called Christians and Protestants, for our distressed, persecuted, Brethren abroad! The Lord hath done great things for us, at the *Reformation*, at the *Revolution*, and of late, in causing the *Protestant Succession* so peaceably to take Place, in the Presence of our Enemies; but let us whilst we rejoyce in our own Mercy, compassionate our Brethren, who are yet in Affliction. We have
very

very encouraging Prospects from the great Wisdom and excellent Endowments of his present *MAJESTY*, and what our Posterity may hope for from the *Prince* and his Royal Offspring; but how would our Joy be increased, if the Blessings of the present Reign, should be so diffusive, as to obtain the Liberty of our persecuted *Brethren*, and to set their *Feet in a large Place*. If with warm Hearts and fervent Devotions, the People of God should joyn in their Supplications at the *Throne of Grace*, we might possibly see, that as *the Lord hath been on our side*, so he will also appear for our suffering *Brethren* too. But to proceed,

Obs. III. GOD's Espousing his Church and People's Cause, is their Safety and Security.

I F the Lord had not been on Israel's side, their Enemies, when their wrath was kindled against them, would have swallowed them up Quick, but God's Presence with them was their Security.

T H E R E was no want of Fury in the Enemy, nor of Power, had not God engaged in the quarrels.

H A D not he espoused his Peoples Cause, the Enemy would have prevailed. What could have hindered proud *Pharaoh's* Success? As to all outward appearance, the *Israelites* must needs fall into his Hands, or else perish in the *Red Sea*, had not God *been on their side*, and by a Miracle wrought for the preservation of his People, and at the same time appeared for the Destruction of their *Enemies*.

This *Pfalm* in all the Parts of it may be applyed to this remarkable Deliverance, if the *Pfalmist* did not compose it on purpose, to perpetuate the Remembrance of so great an Event.

WHEN Matters are brought to such a pass, that the usual and ordinary Methods of Providence won't do for the Salvation of his People: God can go out of the usual way, to bring about their Deliverance.

HE caused the *Sun* upon occasion to stand still in Gibeon, *Josh. 10. 12.* that *Joshuab* might have light to pursue his Victories: And he employed the *Artillery* of Heaven, the *Stars* in their Courses to fight against *Sisera*, *Judges 5. 20.* When those *HEROES*, *SHADRACK*, *MESHECK* and *ABEDNEGO*, ventured the Safety of their Lives, upon the *Goodne's* of their Cause, and the Power of God; tho' the Tyrant throws them into the burning Fiery Furnace, the Flame cannot kindle upon them, *Dan. 3. 3.* And when the Prophet *DANIEL* was committed to the *Mercile's Lyons* (which perhaps were kept from Food, that they might fall the more eagerly upon their Prey) their Natural Appetites were restrained, that they might do him no hurt; *Daniel* was too valuable a Morſe!, for these Savage Beasts, and his *Enemies* and *Accusers*, must be the Persons to satisfy their Voracious Appetites, *Daniel 22. 24.*

THUS Wonderfully did God appear! We are often at a loss, and know not, in which way Salvation will come in; but God is never at a loss, for
in

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in the needful season he'll be nigh at hand. Which leads us to a fourth *Proposition.*

Ols. IV. GOD will appear for the Salvation of his Church and P ople, in the needfu', and most proper Season.

W H E N Men rose up against us, then was the Lord on our Side. He observed their Motions, he knew their Enterprize, and when their Schemes were full ripe, and ready for Execution, then God Interposed, that their hands could not perform their Enterprize.

T H E Church's *Enemies* they often Triumph before Victory, and by their Insolence and Pride engage the Power of God against them, *Lam 2 16. All thine Enemies have opened their Mouth against thee; they hiss and Gash their Teeth; they say we have swallowed her up; certainly this is the Day that we looked for, we have found, we have seen it.* When such a Temper and Spirit appears against Sion, it looks, as if her Redemption drew nigh, and that God who has seen her wrong, will judg her Cause, *Lam. 3. 59. He will be Jealous for his honour, and will remember the reproach of his Servants, how they do bear in t' e r bosom, the reproach of all their mighty People, and will remember the reproaches, wherewith they have reproached, the footsteps of his Anointed, Psal. 89. 50, 51. He sees the Affliction of his People, and hears their Groans, and then comes for their Deliverance, Acts 7. 34.* When need requires, the Lord will awake as one out of sleep, and like a *Mighty Man*, that shouteth by

Reason of Wine. He will smite his Enemies in the hinder Part, and put them to a perpetual reproach, Psal. 78. 65, 66. He can easily cut his Enemies short of their expectations, and put them in fear, that they may know themselves to be but Men, Psal. 9. 20.

JACOB was brought under dismal Apprehensions upon the Account of his Brother Esau, and then God turned the heart of Esau, towards his Brother, Gen. 32. 11, and 33, 4. when Laban pursued Jacob, full fraught with revenge, God speaks to him in a Dream, and forewarns him not to speak to Jacob, either good or bad. Thus God appeared for him, his Family and Substance. And when God doth not turn the Hearts of his Peoples Enemies he can go a severer way to Work, answerable to the Prayers of his Church. Psal. 68. 1, 2. *Let God arise, let his Enemies be scattered, let them also that hate him flee before him, as smoke is driven away, so drive them away: As Wax melteth before the fire, so let the Wicked perish at the presence of God.*

WHEN it shall turn to God's Glory, he will arise to the Confusion of his Enemies. How full are the Experiences of God's People, as to Personal and Public Deliverances! How was David delivered out of the Paw of the Lyon and the Bear, and afterwards obtained the Victory in that unequal Match with great Goliath? *Many are the Afflictions of the Righteous, but the Lord delivereth him out of them all,* Psal. 34. 19. and he delivers in the proper season, *call upon me in the day of trouble I will deliver thee,* Psal.

50 15. And by the seasonableness of Divine Appearances, he not only lays strong Tyes upon our Gratitude, for the Mercies vouchsafed; but there's a peculiar sweetness resulting from the seasonableness; Were the extremity less, or the danger not so pressing, the Mercy would not be so sweet, as when it is given in for our Rescue, when Matters are brought to a Crisis, and our all lyes at stake. As a delay, in such a Case, might prevent the Deliverance; so God's speedy Appearance enhances the Mercy. And such is his Wisdom, that he knows the danger, in every step of it's advance; and such is his Goodness, that in the fittest season, he'll exalt his Power in his People's Salvation. We have heard with our Ears, and our Fathers have told us, what God has done in their Days, our own Eyes, also have seen his Salvation, in what we commemorate this Day, and we may with Admiration cry; What has God wrought! which leads to the Fifth and Last Proposition.

Observ. V. DIVINE Appearances in favour of the Church and People of God, ought to be remembred and call for a thankful acknowledgment.

What God had done for *Israel*, deserved their particular Notice: *If the Lord had not been on their side*, what would have become of them! They were obliged to impress the Sence of the Deliverance upon their Minds, by considering, how it would have been, if God had not appeared; *If the Lord had not been on our side, NOW may Israel say*, take notice and speak of the Deliverance which may bring us to the Intended

AP-

APPLICATION.

TO consider the Acknowledgment due for Divine Deliverances. *Now may Israel say. SAT,*

TO WHOM? and

HOW?

First, TO WHOM Israel was to say what God had wrought.

First, TO God himself. We must regard the Operations of the Lord, and the Work of his Hands. Mercies given from above, should attract our eyes thither. We should look to the liberal hand that dispenses all our benefits; God expects our acknowledgment, and that we should own his Wisdom, Power, Goodness, and Faithfulness in all the Mercy, that comes upon us. He expects we should let him know our receipt of undeserved Favours. And it's hard, if Mercies won't work upon us so far as to tell our Gracious God, what we have received at his Hands. Not that he is ignorant and dispenses his Favours, at Random, but that we might give Proofs of our Gratitude, he expects we should own to him received Mercies.

Secondly, TO one another, we should speak to one another, of what God has done for us. 1. To Friends, talk with them of God's wondrous Works, They that fear'd the Lord, spake often one to another, Mal 3. 16. and no doubt, they spake of Providential Occurrences. 2. To Enemies, under the conduct of Prudence, we should let even our Enemies know, that we rejoyce in

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in God, the *Rock* of our *Salvation*: It may be the Means of their *Conviction*, when they see all their Plots and Divices frustrated, and brought to naught, by the Finger of God. It may bring them to bethink themselves, and to joyn in the Wonder, as the *Heathen* did with the *Israelites*, *When the Lord turned again the Captivity of Zion* — then said they among the *Heathen*, *the Lord hath done great things for them*, *Psal.* 126. 1, 2. The Enemies and Nations round about, could not but take Notice of what God did for *Israel*, says *Moses*, by way of triumph in the God of our Salvation, Cries out, *Their Rock is not as our Rock, even our Enemies themselves being Judges*, *Deut.* 6. 31, 32. 3. To your Children, Say to them, what God hath done for his People, transmit to them, the knowledg of remarkable Providences, that they may learn to put their trust in God. *Abraham* is a Pattern for Family management, *I know Abraham, that he will command his Children and Household after him, that they shall keep the way of the Lord*, *Gen.* 18. 19. The *Jews* were particularly obliged to inform their Children of the meaning of the *Passover*, to keep up the Remembrance of their great Deliverance, out of the *Land of Egypt*, and out of the *House of Bondage*, *Exod.* 13. 8. *Thou shalt shew thy Son in that Day, saying, THIS IS DONE BECAUSE OF THAT, WHICH THE LORD DID UNTO ME, WHEN I CAME FORTH OUT OF EGYPT*, and v. 14. *when thy Son asketh thee in time to come, saying, WHAT IS*

IS THIS ? that thou shalt say unto him, by strength of Hand the Lord brought us out from EGYPT from the HOUSE of Bondage. In like manner should we talk to our Children, of the great Things that God hath done ; this hath been the Practice of the People of God, and should be Ours, Psal, 88. 4. We will not hide them from their Children, shewing the Generations to come, the Praises of the Lord, and his Strength, and his wonderful Works that he hath done. But,

Secondly, HOW ? How must Israel say, if the Lord had not been on our side, when Men rose up against us ?

First, WITH Wonder and Astonishment, a Deliverance so surprizing, calls for the highest Admiration. We were like them that dreamt, say they, When the Lord turned again the Captivity of Zion, Ps. 125. 1. We were amaz'd at the turn, could scarce believe our own Ears, when we heard of it, or our own Eyes when we saw it. And may not WE, if we look back and consider, what God hath done, cry out with Amazement, What has God wrought ?

Secondly, WITH Humility and Self-abasement, this should be the temper of Mind, with which we should speak of Divine Mercies ; so doth Jacob, Gen. 32. 10. I am not worthy of the lest of all the Mercies — Peter shews his Humility (tho' mixed with weakness) Luke 5. 8. Depart from me Lord, for I am a sinful Man, unworthy of the Mercy.

Thirdly, WITH Pleasure and Delight, We should talk with Pleasure of what God has done for us ; we should rejoyce in his Goodness. How doth the Church

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Church in this *Psal*m, triumph in the Mercy they celebrated: They were, as it were, in a *Rapture* upon the remembrance of their Deliverance, *v. 7. Our Soul is escaped as a Bird out of the Snare of the Fowlers, the Snare is broken, and we are escaped.* They say all this with Pleasure, having their Hearts warmed with a Sence of their Deliverance.

Fourthly, WITH Gratitude and Thankfulness, say what God hath done to the Honour of his Name; Let him have all the *Glory* and the *Praise*, joyn with the Church in renouncing all claim, to any share in the *Glory*, of your Deliverances. *Psal. 115. 1. Not unto Us, O LORD, not unto us, but unto thy Name give Glory: for, thy Mercy & for thy Truths sake.* If we were to put in our Claim, it would be only to shame & confusion of Face; as it was in the Prophet *Daniel's* Time, *Dan. 9. 8 O LORD to us belongeth Confusion of Face, to our Kings, to our Princes, to our Fathers, because we have sinned against thee: To the LORD our GOD belong Mercies, the distribution of them, and the glory of them, and forgiveness though we have rebelled against him.* Let us speak to the Honour of our Benefactor, and thankfully own received Benefits.

Fifthly and lastly, SAY what God has done, to encourage your future trust and dependance. Past Experiences should be as Food for our Faith, and should excite us to a firmer Trust, SAY, that this God, that has saved you, saved you again, and again, *in six and in seven Troubles,* that he shall be your God for ever and ever.

Let Mercies engage to a closer Adherence & a firmer reliance

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reliance, be not like the *Israelites*, *Psal.* 106. 12, 13; who sang his Praise but soon forgot his Works, they made haste to forget, as it may be rendered, and what came of them for their Ingratitude? Many Times did God deliver them, *v.* 43. but they provoked him with their Counsel, and were brought low for their Iniquity; low at that time of day, but much lower since, for the threatned vengeance has taken place, they are become an Astonishment and a Proverb, & a by Word among the Nations, *Deut.* 28. 37. *Jer.* 24. 9. And if WE imitate them in our Ingratitude and Disobedience, tho' God will have a Church, he may reject us: Whereas, if Mercies bring us closer to him, and being delivered out of the Hands of our Enemies, we serve him without Fear, in Holiness and Righteousness; we shall find, that his Eyes will be always upon us for Good, and his Ears open to our Cry; and though fresh difficulties may occur, yet still the Lord will be on our side; if we wait on the Lord and keep his way, our eyes shall see our desire upon our Enemies and our Ears shall hear our desire upon the wicked, that rise up against us. For lo thine Enemies O LORD, or lo thine Enemies shall perish, all the workers of Iniquity shall be scattered, *Psal.* 92. 9.

FINIS.

